

Applications

Employment applications are an important part of the hiring process. Many employers require an application as the first step to employment. Other employers may not require an application until later in the employment process. Still other employers may never require an application. No matter when an application is requested, it is an important job search tool. It is used to judge you as a prospective employee and is an opportunity to sell your qualifications.

Employers use the application to collect information about your qualifications and to compare you to other applicants. Most employers receive hundreds and even thousands of applications a year. The reality is that employers screen out most applications and read only those that catch their attention. Therefore, you need to do everything possible to create the perfect application. Listed below are some suggestions.

Visual Impact

The application should be neat, with no errors in grammar or spelling. Be sure to print neatly, avoid abbreviations, use black ink and respond to all questions. Use N/A (not applicable) if the section does not apply to you. If you are seeking professional or office jobs, then you may want to type the application.

Follow Directions

Read the entire application before you begin. Pay close attention to what is being asked and how you are expected to respond. Pay attention to and honor those sections that say "Do Not Write Below This Line" or "Office Use Only." You should read these sections carefully.

They may give you insight into the evaluation process.

Be Positive

During your job search you want to present a positive yet honest picture of yourself. Avoid any negative information, especially personal, legal or financial problems. Look for ways to show that you are the right person for the job. Expound on your positive character traits and think about what you would look for in an employee.

Be Honest

It is important to be truthful on an application. The information you provide will become a permanent part of your employment record when hired. False information can be a basis for dismissal. However, do not volunteer more information than the employer is seeking or is necessary to sell your qualifications.

Target Your Qualifications

You will need to do a little research and look for ways to target your qualifications to the specific requirements of the job. It is also useful to target the work philosophy and culture of the organization.

Personal Data Sheet

Preparation for completing a job-winning application begins at home. Take the time to gather and organize all of the information you need including education, employment history, clear and concise descriptions of previous job duties, a list of significant skills, and reference information. Keep this data sheet with you whenever you contact an employer. You never know when you will need this



Application Tips

Do:

- Be accurate
- Be informative
- Be complete
- Be honest
- Print neatly
- Sign the application

Don't:

- Misspell words
- Cross out writing
- Leave unanswered questions
- Wrinkle or fold the application
- Turn the application in late
- Mention health, personal, legal or financial problems

information. (Ask your Employment Counselor for a copy of “Checklist for Job Interviews” DWS 07-02.)

Salary Requirements

When asked about salary requirements, it is best to respond with “Open” or “Negotiable.” This is often a knockout question used to screen applicants. Use this response even when the wage is posted. You never know what the future holds, and you may be able to negotiate a higher wage.

Reasons for Leaving

When stating why you left a job, avoid terms like “Fired, Quit, Illness or Personal Reasons.” Such terms may screen you out for the job. Indicate that it was time to move on. If you respond with, “I would like to explain at the interview,” you very likely will be called upon to do so. Look for positive statements about why you left a job such as “Looking for More Responsibility,” or “Seeking a More Challenging Position.”

Position Desired

Never leave this question blank or reply “Any” or “Open.” The employer will not try to figure out where you fit in their organization. If the job is an advertised job or you are looking for a specific position, enter the job title. If you do not know the job title, state the department in which you want to work. If you are interested in more than one job, fill out more than one application.

Illegal Questions

Some applications may contain questions that are tricky or even illegal. These may include questions about age, sex, disabilities, health, marital status, children, race and criminal convictions. It is up to you how you respond to these questions. Generally, if the question does not raise a problem, answer it. If it does, you may want to use N/A or a dash. But beware, you may be screened out by too many non-responses.

References

References are an important part of your job search so choose them carefully. Do not just look for someone who is influential in the community but someone who can honestly talk about your qualifications. Before you use someone as a reference, be sure to talk to them about your job search and get their permission.

There are four kinds of references. Employment references are former employers or direct supervisors. Professional references are people who worked with you or know you in your work environment. Academic references are teachers and others who can talk about your school accomplishments. Personal references are people who only know you socially. The employment or professional references are the most valuable because they can discuss your qualifications.

Additional Application Tips

If possible, take the application home so you won't be rushed while completing it. This is especially helpful if you have trouble with spelling and grammar (it gives you the opportunity to seek help).

Use an erasable pen, or keep handy a bottle of correction fluid for fixing errors.

Write out responses on a separate sheet of paper or on a second copy of the application before writing it on the final application. Double check grammar, spelling and content.

OUR MISSION

We provide employment and support services for our customers to improve their economic opportunities

“A proud member of America's Workforce Network”

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